

Relationships

It's been said; the Christian faith is not a religion but a relationship. The difference is, religion gives rules to keep and if successful, one is accepted in the end. The gospel accepts you first as a justified full son and then relationship behavior follows. So what is a relationship like? It's been observed that rules without relationship result in rebellion but relationship without rules results in ruin. There are 3 main parts to a relationship.

1. Entering a relationship – Children enter into a family by birth or adoption. People become friends by choice, or two enter marriage by a love commitment.

2. Type of relationship – Marriage requires different responsibilities than just two friends. If the relationship is children and parents then love, support and guidance are the parents' responsibility, and trust and obedience are the children's responsibility.

3. Expectations in a relationship – The type of relationship defines the expectations for each other. If it's marriage, then the man needs to know his headship role and the woman her submissive role – unlike friends. Misguided expectations make for a bad relationship.

1. Entering the Christian relationship. A repentant sinner comes into God's family relationship by adoption. "Ye have received the Spirit of **adoption**, whereby we cry, **Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,**" Rom. 8:15,16. We come into our relationship, not by a law of works (religion) like Israel, Exo. 19 – but by being born of His Spirit through choosing to place faith in Jesus Christ the Lord.

2. Type of Christian relationship – We are children of God the Father. Christ is also our Head (as a bridegroom to his bride). We are now "*joint-heirs*" together, Rom. 8:16-17. (Relationship is why a one can't leave beliefs behind when entering a different place than a church).

3a. Our relational expectation of our Lord – As our Father, the Lord is the authority. We should expect Him to give us guiding instruction and be faithful in love. We should expect Him to be the source of wisdom and thus worthy of honor. And this is exactly what our Lord and Savior does. (Jn. 4:24, Jn. 14:21, Heb. 10:23, 1Jn. 4:9, 1Cor. 1:30, Col. 2:3, 19).

3b. The Father and Lord's relational expectation of us – To say the most important thing is our salvation from judgment and that nothing else really matters is to not understand relationship. Did He save us for a reason?

The Father says in Malachi 1:6 to His people concerning their poor relationship; "A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you." The Lord Jesus said in Luke 6:46; "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

If in a saved relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ who paid sin's debt, is it logical (not legalism) to expect Him to instruct us? Is it rational for us to trust and obey? We obey not to get in a relationship but because we have one. Is relationship love two sided?